

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Responsive to the Official Action mailed October 2, 2006, applicants have further amended the claims of their application in an earnest effort to place this case in condition for allowance. Specifically, independent claims 12 and 19 have been amended. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The above amendments to claims 12 and 19 are supported by the instant specification (e.g., see FIGS. 5-6; page 13, line 27 to page 14, 3).

In the Final Office Action, claims 12-21 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Welch et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,022,818) in view of Simon (U.S. Patent No. 5,632,072).

Present independent claims 12 and 19 recite that a three-dimensional image comprising an array of upstanding projections and a network of liquid-accepting channels is formed only in the first fibrous (liquid-acceptance) layer, but not the adjoining second fibrous (liquid-distribution) layer, nor, if present, a third cellulosic fibrous (liquid-retention) layer.

Therefore, the multi-component fabrics of the present invention make it possible to exploit the use of different materials or constructions selected for each of the liquid-acceptance layer, liquid-distribution layer, and retention layer (if used), respectively, of the composite in an enhanced manner for the performance attribute needed or desired for each respective layer, effective for improving the overall performance of the integrated composite fabric.

The fabrics illustrated and described in Simon appear to be single layered constructions, see Figures 2-7.

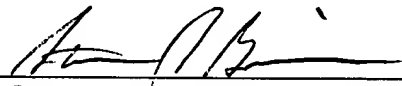
Application No. 09/903,215
Amendment dated December 27, 2006
Reply to Office Action of October 2, 2006

The separate relied upon reference to Welch et al., as admitted by the Examiner in the record, fails to teach three-dimensional imaging of a surface of a fabric, amongst other significant differences with the present invention. Welch et al. is not combinable with Simon to meet all the claimed features of the present invention, because Simon doesn't describe multi-component fabrics and Welch et al. does not teach three-dimensional imaging of a fabric surface.

In view of the foregoing, formal allowance of claims 12-21, 24, and 31-32 is believed to be in order and is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner wish to speak with applicants' attorneys, they may be reached at the number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required in connection with this submission to Deposit Account No. 23-0785.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this paper is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage at First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on **December 27, 2006**.

